



In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
St. Mary and St. Joseph
COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Deacons Meeting – Sunday, Oct 02, 2011

+ Deacons Convention

- An idea to organize a convention for the deacons – perhaps on a Saturday 9:00am to 5:00pm – and it can be scheduled bi-yearly then.
- Topics can be arranged to address church history, rituals, significance of hymns, etc.
- Each convention may have a theme and related topics that can be distributed on some deacons, or perhaps guest speakers can be invited too.

+ Responsibility of deacons serving in the altar

- It is not only saying responses and take care of the shoria but it's about serving the entire altar. For example: clean the altar, the chairs, the shoria, turn off the microphones, etc.
- Head deacons are responsible to be aware of these things and to distribute these tasks. Always keep in mind that altar deacons are angels surrounding the throne of God, so they can't take off their tonia and just run away before abouna is spreading the water.

+ Arrangement during the Communion

There is an improvement in this area; the following shows the coordination of abounas and the deacons during the communion:

- Abouna give the communion to deacons first.
- Abouna then takes the Body and gives the communion to kids.
 - o Deacon has to be in front of abouna saying **(Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord)** symbolizing St. John the Baptist. He goes ahead of the Body and says that loudly (be careful not to confuse or block abouna while moving) until he reaches beside the table to give communion.
 - o Deacon is like a watching angel; he follows abouna's hand, follows the little kids who are taking the communion, and observes everything and tells abouna if any issue.
 - o Another deacon is to stand on a side to organize the kids and the flow of the communion. He can physically move the kids (but not the adults) to approach the Body or the Blood – an adult deacon is requested to do that.

Notes:

- When an adult is having his kid taking a communion (the Blood), the kid takes it first and then stands in front of his father; then his father takes the communion, so the Blood chalice is now on top of the kid's head – he may

accidentally hit it – in this case, the deacon should help pulling the kid slowly to avoid being under the chalice.

- It's good to allow kids deacons helping in collecting the lafaef but not to sacrifice the service. A kid deacon sometimes doesn't take the lefafa from the kid who takes the communion (after taking the Body) who may use it on his mouth after taking the Blood; therefore, the adult deacon is requested to help in this process.
- If a pearl (piece of Body) is accidentally dropped on the floor during the communion, abouna is the only one who comes down and checks it; deacons shouldn't touch it.

+ Preparing the altar during / after the communion

- The altar deacon can take the lafaef on the left side of the altar to put the red towel – The red one can clearly show if any pearl (piece of Body) drop on the towel – but he can leave the lafaef on the right side of the altar.
- There shouldn't be lafaef under the towel at the left side to avoid wetting them while washing the vessels – the water can spill on the towel, goes to the lafaef which will be folded and stored after, and then may become smelly.
- The incense box is to be closed after the tarheem prayer (prayer for the departed after the commemoration of saints). Papers which have the names of departed are to be put in another box and to be closed.
- Deacons use the metal silver container to pour the water on abouna's hand after the communion. The silver containers are used in the main church and small containers are used in the chapel downstairs.
- The idea of deacons drinking the water from the paten is not ritual. However, this is exceptionally done for the deacons serving in the altar since they can't leave the altar and go out to drink water after the communion.

+ General Notes:

- Deacons who wear the tonias and don't serve inside the altar, they are not supposed to be in the altar during the Divine Liturgy, however, they're kindly requested to stand outside.
- Some of the deacons who serve in the altar may decide to sit outside during the sermon, which is ok.
- Deacons who are assigned to lead the Divine Liturgy are requested to follow the time schedule to make sure we finish at 11:30AM.
[http://www.smsj.ca/Deacons/Schedule/Time%20Schedule/Annual%20\(Sunday\)%20Service%20Time%20Schedule.pdf](http://www.smsj.ca/Deacons/Schedule/Time%20Schedule/Annual%20(Sunday)%20Service%20Time%20Schedule.pdf)
- The laptop and projectors are requested to be left ON for Sunday school songs starting right after the Divine Liturgy.

+ Questions & Answers (Q&A)

Q: Do we have to take off shoes when we step on the deacons choruses' area?

A: The reason behind taking off shoes is that God has told Moses to take off his shoes because the place where he stands is holy.

⁵ *Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5).*

And the spiritual meaning is when I take off my shoes; I separate myself from the world and am consecrated to God.

Q: Are the deacons carrying the wine and water (during the offertory) supposed to be crossing their hands?

A: Deacon who is holding the wine crosses his hands and makes a sign of cross before and during the procession of the lamb, but then he can uncross them after. However, deacon who is holding the water doesn't cross his hands.

The procession of the lamb is a symbol of carrying the Lord Jesus Christ to the tomb to bury Him while putting the lamb on the patent and cover it with the dome (which represents the shape of the tomb) and then the lefafa on top of it.

Q: When exactly can the deacon turn off the candle at the end of The Institution Narrative prayer and before the Descent of the Holy Spirit; is it before Amen Amen Amen or after?

A: The right time to turn off the candle is before Amen Amen Amen. The candle is symbolizing the angel. Note: Don't let deacons bow down with candles in their hands.

Glory be to God forever and ever. Amen